

Close Call in the Mine

Working in a mine can be very hazardous. There are many things that can go wrong besides the obvious cave in. In the earth, there are many deadly gasses that can be released through the mining process. The miners used lamps that warned them when the air wasn't safe to breathe.

Lee Lawson Scott wrote of one experience that was a very close call, *"I was working in the mine one time running a hoist underground in Butterfield Canyon. There was one of these book engineers there and some young fellows who had been in the army. After the young fellows came out, they would work on the weekends in the mine."*

"We would have to get timber up to the different levels in the mine. One day, they came up to work for some other reason. I hoisted them up to the main level, and they came in the hoist room. I asked them where they were going. They told me that this engineer had told them to go pull some pipe out of a drift. I said, "Okay," and I dropped the cage down to pick up a couple of cars in a double cage. I was coming back up after another one when I started to think that there was gas back in that drift."

"I slammed on the brake and hung the cage up and took off on a run to the drift. It was 500 feet or so to the drift and the gas was 500 to 600 feet back in the drift. I could see the kids back in the drift trying to light their carbide lights. Their lights were out and they couldn't light them. I yelled at them and told them to come toward me fast."

"They came over and wanted to know why their lights wouldn't work. I told them there was gas out there. I showed them that they could take a light to a certain spot, and the light would let out a long flame and then spit right out. I put the light out of the gas, lit it, put it up to the gas, and it went out again. It was just lucky that they hadn't taken another step or two forward or that would have been it. There must have been a little air space around their heads."



Lee Scott